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ABSTRACT

Eleven abstracts of research projects related to individuals with learning disabilities are compiled in this booklet. The research projects were presented in poster sessions at the March 1992 International Conference of the Learning Disabilities Association of America. Titles and authors of poster sessions include: "Perceptual and Verbal Skills of Disabled Readers in Grades 4-6" (Harold A. Sloan); "A Comprehensive Analysis of Neurocognitive Profiles in Six-to-Eight Year Old Children Referred for Evaluation following School Problems" (Carol A. Haake); "The Differential Prediction of Word Recognition and Reading Comprehension" (Sue P. Sears); "Using the Student Support Team Process To Help Students with Learning and Behavior Problems Succeed in School" (Mary Angela Delvin and others); "Mentoring and Collaboration To Improve Rural Service Delivery" (Steven C. Russell and others); "Regular Education Teachers' Adaptations in Instruction for Regular and Special Education Students" (Sharon Vaughn and others); "The Form and Substance of Secondary Resource Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities" (Robert G. McKenzie); "The MMPI-2 Profile of Adults with Learning Disabilities at a University and Rehabilitation Setting" (Noel Gregg and others); "Strategies for the Assessment of Behaviors and Attitudes That Inhibit Academic Success of Learning Disabled College Students" (Pamela Adelman and Susan A. Vogel); "CAP: Can We Afford Not To Know What It Is?" (Keith Joritz and others); "Oral and Written Expression of Culturally Variant LD Adolescents" (Peggy L. Anderson and Mary E. Cronin). (JDD)

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"STRIVING FOR EXCELLENCE"

Learning Disabilities Association of America
International Conference
Atlanta, Georgia
March 4-7, 1992

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POSTER SESSION ABSTRACTS

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This portion of the yearly LDA conference, the Research Poster Sessions, has become anticipated eagerly by conference attendees interested in the most recent research related to individuals with learning disabilities. This format allows for the exchange of information through both formal (availability of abstracts and display of posters) and informal (discussion with the presenter(s)) means.

This year we inaugurate another means of sharing the results of research. At the request of previous research poster presenters, and conference attendees, submitted abstracts have been compiled in the following booklet. As this new format increases in acceptance, it is hoped that future volumes will include an abstract from each research poster session scheduled for the conference.

Thanks to all who took this opportunity to share their abstracts.

S. C. R.
January, 1992

Learning Disabilities Association
of America
International Conference
Atlanta, Georgia
March 4-7, 1992

Research Poster Session Abstracts
Volume 1
compiled by Steven C. Russell

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PERCEPTUAL AND VERBAL SKILLS OF DISABLED READERS IN GRADES 4-6

This investigation addresses the relative influences of visual-spatial and verbal factors in diagnosing and treating children in grades 4, 5, and 6 who have been identified as reading disabled (RD). Fifty-one subjects with a mean Full Scale IQ of 100, but whose reading comprehension skills on the Gates-McGinitie Reading Tests were below the 31st percentile (mean, 20th percentile), were evaluated with verbal and perceptual-motor tests. No subject was found to have an uncorrected hearing impairment or primary emotional disorder. Complete visual examinations were administered to all of the participants.

When the performance of this experimental group was compared with the mean scores from the standardized test norms for each of the various verbal and perceptual tasks, the disabled readers scored significantly lower than average in seven of eight perceptual and five of six verbal tasks. These results lend support to the hypothesis that both perceptual-motor and verbal deficits are related to deficiencies in reading comprehension.

Only five of the fourteen independent variables showed significant bivariate correlations with the reading comprehension scores of the RD children: King-Devick Eye-movement Test; Auditory-visual Integration Test; Grooved Pegboard Test; Digits Backward Test; Token Test. The relatively low intertask correlations among these tests suggest that a variety of different skills are being probed. The stepwise multiple regression correlational analysis between these independent variables and reading comprehension revealed that 38 percent of the variations in reading comprehension could be accounted for by the first three variables. Adding Digits Backward and the Token Test to the multiple correlation increased the variance by a clinically insignificant 2 percent.

Contrary to the opinions of those who suggest that reading and learning problems in school are primarily a

product of verbal deficits, the results of this study support the hypothesis that visual perceptual, sensory-motor, and intersensory skills are just as important in learning to read. It is of further interest that the variables that provided the strongest correlations with comprehension required sequential processing. Prior testing on normally achieving readers at the same grade levels showed that both, sequential and spatial skills, equally influenced reading comprehension. In this reading disabled group, the expected pattern of development of successive and spatial processing skills was not evident. Whereas the disabled reader may have a good understanding of the meaning of individual words, the lack of adequate spatial skills may impair the ability to comprehend the meaning of the thought as a whole.

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A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS OF NEUROCOGNITIVE PROFILES IN SIX-TO-EIGHT-YEAR-OLD CHILDREN REFERRED FOR EVALUATION FOLLOWING SCHOOL PROBLEMS

This study was conducted to determine whether or not subgroups of neurocognitive profiles could be determined in a heterogeneous population of children evaluated because of school problems and, if so, to determine whether they were differentially associated with Full Scale IQ levels (category 1 = < 70, category 2 = 70-84, category 3 = 85-99, category 4 = 100-114, category 5 = > =115), learning-disability diagnoses, attention-deficit-disorder diagnoses, psychiatric diagnoses, gender, socio-economic status based on parent education (1 = less than high school, 2 = high school or GED, 3 = some but less than four years college, 4 = greater than or equal to four years of college, and parental or familial diagnoses.

Subjects included 143 boys and 66 girls, ages 6-0 to 8-11, 160 of which were caucasian, 46 black, 2 biracial and 1 other, with IQ scores ranging from 44-131 (mean of 92). Factor analysis of the subtests of the Wechsler Intelligence Scales for Children-Revised (Wechsler, 1974), the Test of Language Development-Primary, (Newcomer & Hammill, 1982), and scaled scores of the Developmental Test of Visual-Motor Integration (Beery & Buktenica, 1967) resulted in three factors: a language factor, a visual-spatial factor, and an attentional/sequential factor. Controlling for elevation and scatter, cluster analysis resulted in three profiles: cluster 1 = visual-spatial strength/attention-sequential deficit (VS > AS), cluster 2 = language strength/visual-spatial deficit (L > VS), and cluster 3 = attentional-sequential strength/language deficit (AS > L). A one-way analysis of variance indicated a significant difference among the Full Scale IQ means of the clusters ($p. < .01$). Scheffe's test indicated significant differences between the means of cluster 1 (VS > AS) and cluster 2 (L > VS) ($p. < .05$) and between cluster 1 (VS > AS) and cluster 3 (AS > L) ($p. < .05$). Chi-square tests were significant for distribution of Full Scale IQ categories ($p. < .01$), attention-deficit-disorder diagnoses ($p. < .01$), gender ($p. < .05$), and socio-economic status ($p. < .01$).

In addition to having a significantly higher mean IQ than the other 2 clusters, cluster 1 (VS > AS) contained the lowest percentage of subjects in the lower categories combined with the highest percentage of subjects in the highest category. Consistent with the complexity of the learning disability phenomenon, no significant differences were found in the distribution of learning-disability diagnoses. As might be expected, a significantly greater number of attention-deficit-disorder diagnoses were found in cluster 1 (VS > AS) compared with the other two groups; however, this profile was not definitive as over one-third of the subjects within this cluster did not have an attention-deficit-disorder diagnosis while almost half of the children with this disorder were divided nearly equally among the other two clusters. Girls were nearly equally divided among the groups while nearly half the boys were located in cluster 1 (VS > AS). The distribution of socio-economic status categories among clusters 2 (L > VS) and 3 (AS > L) was similar with the socio-economic status of cluster 1 (VS > AS) discrepantly high compared with the other two. No significant differences were found in the distribution of psychiatric, family, or parental diagnoses. Thus cluster 1 (VS > AS) (the largest) was discrepant from the other clusters in that it had the highest mean Full Scale IQ, contained more IQ scores in the higher categories, more attention-deficit-disorder diagnoses, more boys, and more subjects in the higher ranges of socio-economic status.

Possible explanations for this discrepancy include:

1. This is the most common profile found among children experiencing school problems and boys are more affected than girls.
2. Children who act out (often attention-deficit disordered children and often boys) are more likely to be referred for an evaluation.
3. This sample includes gifted learning disabled students who may be perceived as average or unmotivated in the school setting but who exhibit enough inconsistencies for parents to seek out an independent evaluation.

In addition to addressing the above possibilities, future research should seek to identify neurocognitive profiles in the population at large and determine whether or not they are associated with specific academic patterns. Further, the interaction of neurocognitive profile, gender and psychiatric/psychological variables, needs to be explored both in adults and children. And finally, the related issue of referral patterns is one which needs clarification.

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The Differential Prediction of Word Recognition and Reading Comprehension

A recurring issue in the area of learning disabilities has been the ability to predict rather than respond to reading failure. Therefore, researchers have been interested in identifying pre-school skills that influence and enhance the process of learning to read. Of importance to this research has been the development of comprehensive models of reading.

In particular, it has been suggested that reading can be understood as the "product" of decoding and comprehension; that both are necessary and neither alone is sufficient for reading to occur. Further, developmental models of reading suggest that the reading task changes as the child gains proficiency in reading. Taken together these models suggest that performance on measures of word recognition and reading comprehension may be influenced by different pre-school skills and that these predictive relationships may not remain stable over time. The purpose of this research was to address these issues.

Identified as reasonable pre-school skills related to word recognition were measures of phonological awareness, letter name knowledge, and discrimination of letter combinations. A measure of listening skills was used to predict performance in reading comprehension. Outcome measures were separate subtests of the Stanford Achievement Test: Word Study Skills, Reading Comprehension, Reading Total, and Listening Comprehension. Predictor variables were collected in kindergarten and achievement measured at first, third, and fifth grades. The longitudinal sample was composed of 104 children drawn from a large Southern California public school district.

Results support the notion that with increased reading proficiency performance on word and text level

skills diverge, suggesting the need to separate word recognition from reading comprehension in reading outcome. Further, results of path analysis suggest a relationship from word recognition to reading comprehension but not vice versa. Consistent with numerous other studies, phonological awareness and letter identification are kindergarten skills linked to early reading success; however, of particular interest is the emerging role of listening in predicting reading comprehension performance.

Results have implications for further research and practice. First, they suggest the need to specify reading stages and reading components in the interpretation of research findings. Second, the impact of instructional practices needs to be considered in the development of reading models, and third, the strong relationship between listening and reading needs to be considered as both a predictor of reading performance and as a remedial strategy to aid the poor reader.

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Using the Student Support Team Process to Help Students with Learning and Behavior Problems Succeed in School

This study was designed to identify factors which characterize student support team (SST) operation in Georgia as related to special education referral and placement rates. This study was also designed to determine if significant differences existed between the presence or absence of certain SST operational factors and (a) the percentage of students referred to SST whose referring problem was successfully remediated by the SST, (b) the percentage of students referred from SST to special education, and (c) the percentage of students found eligible for special education placement.

Twenty elementary school sites were visited. Data were collected from structured interviews, written SST procedures, and SST outcome data from the 1989-90 school year.

The mean percentage of students referred to SST was 11% from the 20 school sites. Of the 11% referred to SST, 7.7% were successfully helped by the SST process and 3.3% were referred for special education evaluation. Of the 3.3% referred to special education, 2.6% were found eligible for special education placement.

Results indicated that eight of twelve major operational factors identified in the literature as critical to SST success were characteristic of 19 of the 20 schools participating in the study. These eight factors included: (a) administrative support, (b) inservice training, (c) multidisciplinary membership, (d) monitoring and evaluation of the intervention plan, (e) effective team communication and consensual agreement, (f) clearly defined SST procedures, (g) belief in collegiality and commitment to team problem solving, and (h) a program manager for the SST or each SST referral. Regarding the operational factors, when school staff were involved in the planning of SST procedures and when SST successes were shared with school staff, schools made significantly more appropriate referrals to special education which resulted in higher rates of special education eligibility.

The SST process of one Cobb County, Georgia elementary school which participated in the study exemplified the effectiveness of the process when key operational factors were implemented. Keheley Elementary School, with a population of approximately 730, had strong support for the SST process from both the county administration and the school principal and staff.

Numerous years of commitment to the SST process through continuous staff development, administrative support, and resource allocation had produced a highly effective learner support procedure. With each school staff person considered a member of the SST process, a learner support specialist coordinated teams which worked toward individual student successes. Input and communication among the school staff and between the school and other county elementary schools also served to continually improve the SST process. During the school year studied, nine percent of the school population was referred to SST. Twenty-eight percent of those referred to SST were eventually referred for a special education evaluation. Of those referred to special education at Keheley Elementary School, 94 per cent were found eligible for special education placement.

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Mentoring and Collaboration to Improve Rural Service Delivery

The need for special educators, in particular learning disability specialists, in rural settings to have more comprehensive preparation is increasingly obvious. Many resources, services, and specialized personnel are frequently unavailable to the rural learning disabled student on a timely and consistent basis. Consequently, it has been shown that learning disability staff in rural settings are required to possess broader and more diverse skills, to be more able to operate independent of other special educators and other special education services, and to be highly skilled at adaptation and accommodation, as well as a host of other more specific abilities. In order to address these needs, teacher training programs and inservice programs must be developed to prepare teachers for service in rural special education settings.

Several major goals exist for such teacher training. These goals include: 1) having awareness of, and being able to identify particular needs of rural LD students; 2) training to effectively meet the academic, social, vocational, and ancillary service needs of rural LD students; and, 3) assisting in the recruitment and retention of teaching personnel specifically trained for rural LD. In accomplishing these goals, teachers will learn to enhance service delivery systems for: assessment; physical therapy; occupational therapy; speech/language therapy; community resource utilization; and consultation with interdisciplinary personnel, support staff, and parents. Such teachers broaden their instructional skills to accommodate cross-age, cross-categorical service delivery, and learn to identify problems and develop solutions unique to special education service delivery in rural settings. Many of these skills which enhance the educational experiences of the rural LD student are developed through collaboration and consultation.

Furthermore, through a mentoring approach teachers have unique opportunities to demonstrate and refine knowledge and skills developed collaboratively by agency personnel, parents, and university instructors. Mentoring approaches allow teachers to demonstrate the attainment of these competencies and skills in practicum sites.

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The Form and Substance of Secondary Resource Instruction for Students With Learning Disabilities

One of the chief concerns related to secondary LD programs, and a primary source of contradictory data, is the delivery of core curriculum coursework by special educators. Advocates of this instructional approach consider it to be a reasonable alternative to mainstreaming students into content classes for which they do not possess sufficient prerequisite skills. Opponents, on the other hand, express concern that it is vulnerable to creating a "low track" form of education from which students with handicaps cannot escape. For meaningful dialogue to be sustained, and for future secondary LD teachers to be adequately prepared, two important data-bases must be established.

Research Questions & Procedures

Two research studies were conducted to gather data relative to secondary instruction in LD programs. In Study # 1, 54 State and Territorial Departments of Education were surveyed to determine (a) the degree to which students with learning disabilities in each state receive content coursework from special educators, (b) the pattern of and projected growth in such models, and (c) the perceived adequacy of teacher-training programs for preparing secondary LD teachers to provide content instructions.

In study # 2, the perceptions of 48 LD "content" teachers and 45 "skills" teachers were compared concerning (a) their relationship with the mainstream,

(b) curricular structure, (c) instructional methodology, and (d) the behavioral characteristics of their students. Differences in the teachers' judgments were evaluated by t-test.

Results

The national survey data is based upon the responses of 49 State Directors of Special Education (91% of sample). The results indicate that content instruction is practiced in 41 states and, in those states, LD students receive approximately 50 percent of their core content coursework from special educators. Results also reflect substantial variability across states, as well as between and within geographic regions. The influence of geography in shaping service delivery for LD adolescents is marked.

Results of the second study indicated that despite pronounced differences in caseload and class size, "content" and "skills" teachers are very similar in how they evaluate their instructional emphasis. The data also indicate that the two groups differ not so much in how they teach as in how they perceive the interactions of themselves and their students in the mainstream.

Implications

Although other factors may play a role in shaping secondary LD programs, the results of the national survey suggests that geography exerts a powerful influence. In part, this finding reflects an autonomy in the decision making process that frequently extends beyond the school district level to individual school(s). Such localized freedom may heighten the potential to seriously compromise truly individualized programming.

A primary implication of the second study is the suggested lower sociometric standing of students taught in the "content" model. A critical concern for both teachers and students engaged in this model must be greater interaction with the mainstream in non-content areas.

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THE MMPI-2 PROFILE OF ADULTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES AT A UNIVERSITY AND REHABILITATION SETTING

Researchers have noted that students with learning disabilities have been consistently described as having low self-esteem, poor interpersonal skills, and a negative self-concept. Recently, proposed definitions have begun to acknowledge the life-long impact of the condition of learning disabilities on social competence and social skill attainment. Understanding the impact of specific learning disabilities on an individual's different life stages will aid in developing more appropriate academic, vocational, and social competencies. There has been very little research investigating the similarities and differences of adults with learning disabilities who are successfully completing programs of study at a university compared to adults involved in technical or vocational training programs.

The purpose of this study was to compare the personality profiles of adults with learning disabilities attending a large state university to those participating in training programs at a rehabilitation setting. The study sought to identify affective variables that should be considered in transitional and postsecondary program planning. Also, the study reviewed the relevance and appropriateness of using the revised MMPI, the MMPI-2, for the assessment and intervention of adults with learning disabilities.

Subjects selected for this study were students at the University of Georgia and clients at Roosevelt Warm Springs Institute for Rehabilitation. All subjects had documented histories of learning disabilities and were reevaluated to document the learning disability consistent with the guidelines set forth by the Interagency Council on Learning Disabilities.

Findings from the study indicated that the personality profiles of individuals with learning disabilities at either a rehabilitation setting or seeking a university degree are significantly different

than the normative population. The rehabilitation group in this study demonstrated feelings of social isolation, poor self-concept, self-doubt, and extreme restlessness. Somewhat different profiles were seen with the university group as they indicated feelings of fear, obsessive thoughts, lack of self-confidence, self-doubt, and extreme self-criticism. However, both groups demonstrated profiles of individuals under extreme short and long term stress leading to anxiety.

The MMPI-2 does appear to be a very effective tool for administration to adults with learning disabilities seeking university degrees. However, the data suggests the MMPI-2 should be used cautiously as a personality assessment tool for clients being at rehabilitation settings. Therapeutic goals to deal with generalized anxiety will need to be a part of transitional programs whether adults with learning disabilities will be attending rehabilitation programs or seeking degrees at universities or colleges. Information from the MMPI-2 profile could prove to be invaluable in helping professionals work with such adults both in their academic and social/emotional therapy.

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Strategies for the Assessment of Behaviors and Attitudes that Inhibit Academic Success of Learning Disabled College Students

Although there has been a significant increase in the last ten years in the number of students with learning disabilities attending colleges and universities, there is also an equal if not greater concern among service providers regarding the academic failure rate of these students. Many students who have the academic ability and preparation to succeed in college fail due to certain behaviors and attitudes that prevent success. The purpose of this session is to present strategies for assessing these behaviors and attitudes; strategies include the diagnostic measure Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes, observations of LD specialists and college instructors, and individual support meetings with college counselors.

In a study of the intrinsic factors contributing to successful degree completion of students with learning disabilities, motivation and attitude toward the teaching-learning process were identified as factors that discriminate among successful graduates and those students dismissed for academic reasons. The measure used to assess this domain was the Survey of Study Habits and Attitudes. The three most sensitive scales on this measure were Delay Avoidance, Teacher Approval, and Educational Acceptance. Based on quantitative and qualitative analysis of the performance of 110 college students with learning disabilities, a raw score cut-off of -1 standard deviation below the group mean was selected for these three scales. Forty-one percent of the students dismissed for academic reasons scored at or below

the cut-off on one or more of these scales. Moreover, none of the graduates scored at or below the cut-off on any of these scales.

Using the same cut-off scores, ten out of fifty-four students with learning disabilities who requested LD support services between 1988 and 1991 were identified as at risk for academic failure. Seven scored at or below cut-off on one scale and were considered at minimal risk; two students were at or below cut-off on two scales (at moderate risk); and one students was at or below the cut-off on three of the scales and was considered at high risk. At risk students were observed with special alertness to certain behaviors and teachers' and LD specialists' observations indicative of motivational or attitudinal problems.

Teachers and LD specialists reported frequent absences of high risk students in class and at scheduled sessions for LD assistance. When students were in attendance, often they were not prepared (e.g., to take notes or to work on assignments) or demonstrated a lack of interest in the coursework. At risk students were observed as having difficulty consistently applying themselves. Assignments were often handed in late, incomplete, or in some cases, not at all. When questioned about problems regarding their academic progress, at risk students frequently cited external reasons (e.g., car troubles, relative or friend in need of help) rather than reflecting upon their own behaviors and suggesting ways to change.

Further assessment of behaviors and attitudes was accomplished through individual support meetings with a counselor from the college's counseling department during each new student's first semester on campus. Each student's individual needs with respect to social and emotional support were assessed, and the students were made aware of how they could obtain help to address their needs.

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CAP: Can We Afford Not to Know What It Is?

Research into the incidence and degrees of Central Auditory Processing (CAP) disorders in people with learning disabilities is sparse. However, clinical observation has indicated an increase in the occurrence of such disorders. A large data base, such as that present in the population of the Achieve Program, Southern Illinois University, is a natural source for investigation of this phenomenon.

In Central Auditory Processing Disorders, Problems of Speech, Language, and Learning, Katz states "Central auditory processing (CAP) is the manipulation and utilization of sound signals by the central nervous system...what we do with what we hear." The Central Auditory Processing evaluation encompasses a variety of activities from the detection of auditory input to the more complex inner workings of the auditory cortex. The Central Auditory Processing evaluation is a progressive assessment.

Our presentation will focus on the incidence of this condition in a young adult population: possible causal factors, typical indicators, and treatment procedures. Clinical observation done at the Achieve Program indicates a correlation between learning disabilities and Central Auditory Processing disorders. If this is true, this indicates a strong need for this population to receive CAP evaluations.

Possible etiological factors are middle ear infections in the first three years of life and the age of parents at the time of the child's birth. These conditions appear to correlate with a delay in

language and speech development which, in turn can produce certain behavioral characteristics that can be observed.

Prior to receiving treatment for this condition, the administration of a Central Auditory Processing evaluation must be done. Following this evaluation, a set of recommendations, which may include both direct therapy and environmental management, will be produced for the client. These recommendations are specific to each individual client.

Information regarding this little studied, but highly important topic, will be disseminated and discussed.

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Oral and Written Expression of Culturally Variant LD Adolescents

The assessment of culturally different students who are suspected of having learning handicaps has often been problematic because of difficulty measuring language within a differential diagnostic framework of disorder versus difference. While there are many statistically sophisticated language tests for the Standard English speaker, there is a very little available for examining the linguistic skill of the variant speaker whose language falls outside of these confines. The problem with non-biased language assessment is particularly germane to the case of the learning disabled student. Since learning disabilities are by definition language based disorders and language is a culturally biased phenomenon, valid assessment that accommodates linguistic variance is crucial. Therefore, it is important to examine the usefulness of various measurement techniques for discriminating between language differences and disorders in the learning disabled population. The objectives of the current research project were: (1) to determine whether standardized and informal language assessment measures for oral and written language could discriminate between the skills of learning disabled and normally achieving students who reside in the culturally different area of rural southern Louisiana, and (2) to describe differences and similarities in the oral and written language performance of these two groups.

Method

Subjects. The subjects for this study included 18 learning disabled and 18 non-learning disabled adolescents (12, 13, and 14-year-olds) who reside in a rural parish in southern Louisiana. This is a rural parish whose economy is highly dependent upon shrimping, oystering and trapping trades. It is a geographically unique area because of the multitude of bayous which separate land masses and result in isolated living situations. This watery topography has required the necessity of operating one of the country's only school boats to provide transportation to students who live in isolated areas of this parish. There is a very

little transiency in this community; most families have been settled for at least three generations.

Instrumentation. All subjects were individually administered the Woodcock Language Proficiency Battery (Woodcock, 1980). This test measures both oral and written language, yielding four cluster scores of performance: Reading, Oral Language, Written Language, and Broad Language. Written and oral language samples were also elicited from the subjects.

Analysis. Standardized test data included raw scores for each subtest (i.e. (1) Picture Vocabulary, (2) Antonyms-Synonyms, (3) Analogies, (4) Letter-Word Identification, (5) Word-Attack, (6) Passage Comprehension, (7) Dictation, and (8) Proofing) and standard scores for the subtest clusters (i.e., Oral Language, Reading, Written Language, and Broad Language). The written language samples were evaluated with the following techniques: (1) syntax quotient (Myklebust, 1965), (2) type-token ration, (3) frequency count of words with seven or more letters, (4) percentage of words correctly spelled, and (5) words-per-T-unit. Oral language samples were subjected to the Lingquest I (Mordecai, Palin & Palmer, 1985) computer analysis. Three major methods of analysis were implemented: (1) t-tests were conducted to determine group differences on all language measures, (2) frequency and percentage distributions were computed to examine performance differences, and (3) a contrastive linguistic evaluation was used to examine individual responses within a difference/disorder perspective.

Results

All subtest clusters of the WLPB discriminated between the learning disabled and normally achieving groups; however the margin of difference was less on the Oral Language Cluster than on the other clusters. Performance for the non-learning disabled students was over one standard deviation below the mean on this cluster and over a half standard deviation below on all other clusters. Significant between group differences were observed for all subtests except Picture Vocabulary. With regard to the written language evaluation, Syntax Quotient and the percentage of words correctly spelled were the only two variables which discriminated between the learning disabled and achieving subjects. The computer analysis of the oral language samples revealed numerous qualitative between group differences.